

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06235 140310Z

ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 6235

NODIS CHEROKEE

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (UPGRADED TO NODIS CHEROKEE)

DAMASCUS FOR USDEL SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJ: CONVERSATION BETWEEN SECRETARY VANCE AND
FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS

1. FOLLOWING IS UNCLEARED REPORT OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN
SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS IN CAR ENROUTE
FROM AIRPORT TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE MORNING DECEMBER 13
FOR SUCH DISTRIBUTION AS SECDEL WISHES.

2. BOUTROS SAID SYRIANS WERE GOING TO
TAKE A TOUGH LINE WITH SECRETARY. HE HAD BEEN CALLED
LAST NIGHT (BY KHADDAM) AND TOLD THIS. WE HAD TO BEAR
IN MIND THE COMPETITION AND DIFFERENCE IN PERSONALITIES
BETWEEN SADAT AND ASAD. ASAD COULD NOT APPEAR TO BE
FOLLOWING IN SADAT'S WAKE. IT WAS THEREFORE
IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT TRY TO PUSH SYRIANS INTO GOING
TO GENEVA OR ATTENDING CAIRO CONFERENCE. SECRETARY
SAID WE HAD NO INTENTION OF TRYING TO TALK SYRIANS INTO
GOING TO CAIRO. QUESTION HE WOULD LIKE TO ASK, HOWEVER,
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WAS WHETHER SYRIANS WOULD GO TO GENEVA. BOUTROS SAID IT
WOULD DEPEND UPON CONDITIONS AND IT WOULD DEPEND UPON
WHAT CAME OUT OF CAIRO.

3. BOUTROS SAID THAT LEBANESE WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT
DECISIONS CONCERNING PALESTINIANS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN AT
GENEVA. PRESENCE OF A HALF MILLION PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

WAS A MATTER OF VITAL CONCERN TO LEBANESE. LEBANESE COULD NOT ACCEPT GENEVA AGREEMENT WHICH SAID PALESTINIANS SHOULD STAY WHERE THEY WERE. (HIS APPARENT MEANING AS EXPLAINED BY SUBSEQUENT COMMENT WAS THAT IF THERE WERE TO BE A GENEVA PEACE ACCORD WHICH STIPULATED THE PALESTINIANS WOULD REMAIN IN PRESENT LOCATIONS RATHER THAN HAVING ACCESS TO A PALESTINIAN ENTITY SOMEWHERE OR BEING ABLE RETURN TO ISRAEL, LEBANESE COULD NOT ACCEPT.) BOUTROS ASKED IF SECRETARY ENVISAGED PALESTINIAN ENTITY BEING ABLE TO ABSORB SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION PALESTINIANS RESIDENT IN LEBANON. SECRETARY SAID HE DID NOT.

4. SECRETARY NOTED THAT SYRIANS ALSO HAD A PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE. BOUTROS SAID, YES THEY DID, BUT IN THEIR CASE IT WAS MUCH LESS GRAVE. OUT OF A POPULATION OF 8 OR 9 MILLION THEY HAD 120 THOUSAND REFUGEES. LEBANESE HAD PERHAPS 500 THOUSAND OUT OF A POPULATION OF THREE MILLION. FOR THE SYRIANS THE FATE OF THE PALESTINIANS WAS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO BE NEGOTIATED AT GENEVA BUT FOR THE LEBANESE IT WAS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH.

5. BOUTROS ASKED IF THE SECRETARY HAD ANY NEW IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM OF SOUTH LEBANON. SECRETARY ASKED WHAT THE OUTLOOK WAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SHTAURA III. BOUTROS SAID HE DID NOT THINK IT WAS GOING TO OCCUR. SYRIANS WANTED IT IMPLEMENTED
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BUT THEY WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO PUT PRESSURE ON PALESTINIANS TO GET IT DONE. AT THIS POINT THEY NEEDED PALESTINIANS AS MUCH AS PALESTINIANS NEEDED THEM.

6. SECRETARY DID NOT OFFER ANY SUGGESTIONS. HE NOTED THAT WE WELL AWARE OF COMPLEXITY OF PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO LEBANESE.
PARKER

NOTE BY OC/T: BEIRUT 6235 CAPTION RAISED TO NODIS CHEROKEE
PER STATE 297648

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